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CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE DOD SPECIAL DISCHARGE REVIEW PROGRAM

BY

D. Bruce Bell

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MARCH 1978

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CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE DoD
SPECIAL DISCHARGE REVIEW PROGRAM

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FOREWORD

The present report was requested by Mr. John G. Kester, The Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, to help him in determining whether the Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP) for Vietnam Era Veterans was attracting the kinds of persons it was intended to serve. He was particularly concerned with "such factors as family income, race, geographic origin, and rural vs urban" origins.

The present report not only provides the information requested but also shows what kinds of soldiers gave less than honorable service. These individuals would not only be eligible for this program but also provided unsatisfactory service in the military. Therefore, the report provides information about the SDRP and also about recruiting standards being applied to the current Army.

Work was done under Army project 2Q762717A766 in the Personnel Accession and Utilization Technical Area of the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, with the assistance of the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) in the analysis of the data.

Joseph Zeidner
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CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE DoD SPECIAL DISCHARGE REVIEW PROGRAM

BRIEF

Requirement:

This report presents a study
To describe participants in the Department of Defense Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP), and to determine the extent to which (1) the eligibles were typical of soldiers serving during the Vietnam Era, and (2) the participants were representative of the overall eligible group.

Procedure:

The eligibles (both General Discharge (GD) and Undesirable Discharge (UD) holders) were contrasted with soldiers in general who had received Honorable Discharges (HDs) during the same time frame. The characteristics of program participants, in turn, were contrasted with those of the eligibles (i.e., who had GDs or UD from the same era but had not participated).

The first step was to locate in the DoD loss files persons separated with HDs, GDs, and UD during the Vietnam era. Relevant information was extracted for all GDs and UD; a 1 in 10 random sample of HDs was used because of the expense involved in handling so many cases. The separation records of the participants were then located in the same loss files. Using one data source--DoD loss files--insured comparable data. While this procedure did result in comparable data that addressed most of the research questions, it had one major limitation. DoD loss files were not automated before July 1970; thus it was impossible to compare all participants with all eligibles and HD holders. By omitting persons separated prior to July 1970, the report misses 58% of the eligibles, 62% of the participants, and 74% of those who received Honorable Discharges. But to the extent that persons separated after July 1970 are representative of the total era, valid inferences can be drawn.

The extent of bias introduced by using the "shortened eligibility window" (i.e., 1 July 1970 through 28 March 1973) is addressed by analysis of information for the entire era from the one service which has such data in automated form: the United States Air Force (USAF).

Findings:

Persons who received either GDs or UD during the Vietnam Era (and were thus eligible for the SDRP) were different from those receiving HDs

on 8 of the 16 variables measured. At the time they entered service they were less educated, lower in mental ability, and younger. Their service was significantly shorter--generally less than 2 years--and they tended to be lower in rank when discharged (most were E-1 or E-2). Because of their shortened tenures, they were younger and more often single when discharged, and they are currently younger than those who received HDs.

Among GD and UD holders, SDRP participants were different than eligibles on 3 of the 18 measures examined: length of service, pay grade, and current age. The GD participants served longer, rose higher in grade, and are currently younger than eligibles, in general. The UD participants served longer, rose higher in grade, and are currently older. On other measures, the participants seemed quite representative of the groups from which they came. Thus, in terms of such preservice characteristics as race, region of origin, family income, and education, the SDRP seemed to attract the kinds of persons it was intended to serve. But the strongest determinant of participation was type of discharge: persons with UDs participated at a much higher rate than those who received GDs. They had more to gain from the program.

Early participants in the USAF analyses resembled early SDRP participants. With the exception of date of discharge, data from the shortened eligibility period yielded essentially the same results as that from the entire era. The USAF analyses increase our confidence that the findings reported here hold for the overall program.

Utilization of Findings:

Eligibility--as opposed to participation--was related to preservice characteristics and to type of service rendered. This fact helps place the SDRP in perspective.

Participants and eligibles did not differ appreciably in preservice characteristics; the SDRP did attract the kinds of persons it was intended to serve. The differences which emerged suggest that those with better service records--and thus a greater probability of receiving upgrades--applied at a higher rate. Moreover, those with UDs--having more to gain from being upgraded--also applied at a higher rate. Perceived benefit clearly remained the critical variable.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE DOD SPECIAL DISCHARGE
REVIEW PROGRAM

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CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE DoD SPECIAL DISCHARGE REVIEW PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

In April 1977, the Department of Defense began a Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP) for veterans of the Vietnam Era. 1/ The program consisted of two phases. In phase I, deserters still at large could receive Undesirable Discharges (UDs) 2/ by returning to military control. In phase II, holders of General and Undesirable Discharges (GDs and UD) could request review of their discharges under new, more liberal criteria designed to facilitate up-grading them. 3/

This report is the third and final report on the demographic characteristics of persons participating in the second phase of the program. The first report focused upon the differences between eligibles and participants during the first 2 1/2 weeks of the program (Bell, 1977a). The findings suggested that the program in its earliest stages was generally attracting the kinds of persons it was designed to serve. The differences that emerged between participants and the eligible group from which they had come suggested that program benefits and publicity were better explanations for participation than any personal characteristics of potential participants.

A second report was prepared in June (Bell, 1977b) to provide data for Congressional hearings held to review the SDRP. 4/ Since 94% of those discharged during the Vietnam Era received Honorable Discharges (HDs), the

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- 1/ This Program, like the Ford Clemency Program, defined the Vietnam Era as 4 August 1964 (the date of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution) through 28 March 1973 (the date the last American troops were withdrawn from Vietnam).
 - 2/ The term Undesirable Discharge has been recently replaced by the phrase "discharged under other than honorable conditions." For the sake of simplicity, this report will use the older, more succinct term, UD. A report on the at-large deserters participating in phase I of the SDRP is in preparation.
 - 3/ There were other eligibility restrictions, however. For example, men who deserted from combat zones or who were discharged for acts of violence were excluded.
 - 4/ For further details of the hearings and the subsequent changes in the SDRP see: (1) House Report No. 95-580 accompanying H. R. 8698 (Committee on Veterans' Affairs), (2) Senate Report No. 95-305 (Committee on Veterans' Affairs), (3) Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 13, No. 42: Oct. 8, Presidential Statement, and (4) Public Law 95-126--October 8, 1977.

second report began by contrasting the characteristics of eligibles--the 5.5% who received GDs or UD~~s~~--with those of the honorably discharged 5/. Eligibles were clearly different both at entry and during their service careers. They were more likely to have been high school dropouts, 17 years old, and in the lower mental categories of the AFQT than were the HD group. They also had much shorter service careers (generally less than 2 years) and were thus younger and less likely to be married at discharge. They were lower in rank or pay grade (both because of their short tenure and a tendency to experience reductions in rank). Because of the importance of these findings in understanding the characteristics of program participants, they will be reviewed in this report.

The variables associated with participation are easier to understand if the GD and UD holders are analyzed separately. Throughout the program, UD holders, who had more to gain from being upgraded, were more likely to apply. Those with better service records--and thus a greater probability of receiving upgrades--were also more likely to apply. Perceived benefit, not personal characteristics per se, seemed to account for program participation.

The final report updates these findings. But it also probably reflects the impact of Congressional hearings held in both the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs in June 1977. Both the criticism of the program and the resulting changes enacted into law (October, 1977), may have impacted upon participation.

METHODOLOGY

The report addresses two major questions. First, how were "eligibles" different from those who received Honorable Discharges (HDs)? To answer this question, personal characteristics and service experiences of Vietnam Era veterans in general are contrasted with those of the eligibles.

Second, were participants "representative" of eligibles--most of whom had not participated? 6/ Participant characteristics are compared

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- 5/ The remaining group--less than 1% of the total--received punitive discharges (i.e., Bad Conduct or Dishonorable Discharges).
- 6/ When the Program ended October 4th, there had been 63,091 inquiries; 39,248 of whom were eligible. Among eligibles, 68% (26,645) had UD~~s~~ and 32% (12,599) had GD~~s~~. Some (2.2%) of the UD holders were also participants in the Ford Clemency Program. Put another way, 22% of the eligibles became participants. Consistent with the findings of this report, there was a higher rate of participation among UD than GD holders (i.e., 34% of the UD holders participated vs 13% of the GD holders).

with those of all eligible persons with the same types of discharges during the era. DoD loss files were the major source of information used to answer the first two questions; information about the participants came from the data files of the SDRP Joint Liaison Office in St. Louis, MO and was current as of October 1977.

DoD loss files only go back to 1 July 1970 and thus only cover 42% of the eligible and 38% of the participant group. How do these data limitations impinge upon the findings? To answer this question, a special analysis was conducted on USAF data covering the entire period. Although the USAF might not be the service of choice for making generalizations about the entire era, it was the only service with discharge review records for the entire period. This analysis of USAF data can be found in Appendix A.

Differences among groups were evaluated using chi square analyses and associated correlations. The question asked in the comparison of the HD holders and the eligibles was whether the two groups were different from one another. The question asked about the participants was whether they were a random sample from the population of eligibles. The method of computing chi square in the two cases was thus different. In the first case it was a comparison between two groups; in the second case, it was a test of randomness of samples from the population. When the eligible and honorable groups or the eligible and participant groups were essentially the same, the chi square was not statistically significant. When those receiving HDs were different from those receiving GDs or UD, or when participants with UD were different from UD holders, in general, the chi square was statistically significant.

However, the presence of a statistically significant result does not always mean that the observed difference has practical utility or policy implication. This difference between statistical and practical differences is particularly true in the present report where we are dealing with very large groups of individuals. Therefore, although we display all differences, we will only discuss those which are large enough to have practical consequences (i.e., those which explain at least 4% of the variance in the variable being analyzed).

In the analyses to follow, these differences will be those associated with correlations of .20 or larger. If a given analysis involved variables which had only two categories (e.g., male and female) the correlation used was a phi (Φ). If it involved more than two categories, the correlation was a Cramer's "V" (Hays, 1973).

The groups analyzed all came from the DoD loss files for the period 1 July 1970 through 28 March 1973. The eligibles were all persons from

this period who received GDs or UD's. The HDs were a 1 in 10 sample. (The reason for sampling among HD holders was principally cost.) The sizes of the groups involved are listed below:

(1) Persons with Honorable Discharges: 189,218 individuals (a 1 in 10 sample)

(2) Persons with General Discharges: 100,171 individuals

(3) Persons with Undesirable Discharges: 78,736 individuals

(4) Eligible participants at the end of the program: 39,348 individuals

(a) Eligible participants in the "Window" with GDs: 4,316 individuals

(b) Eligible participants in the "Window" with UD's: 11,646 individuals

RESULTS

The presentation of results is divided into two parts: characteristics of eligibles and characteristics of participants. Within the second category, characteristics of participants with GDs and UD's are considered separately.

ELIGIBILITY

Characteristics of eligibles at entry are reviewed; the type of service rendered and the characteristics at discharge are also examined.

Eligibles at Entry

Table 1 shows how eligibles differed at the time they entered service from men who later got honorable discharges. The specific variables include: (1) race, (2) sex, (3) region of the USA, (4) home of record outside the 50 United States, (5) preservice education, (6) mental category, (7) method of entering the service, (8) age at entry, and (9) branch of service.

Race. There is a small ($V = .11$), but statistically significant rela-

Table 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF "ELIGIBLES" AND "HONORABLES" AT ENTRY

Characteristic	"Eligibles" (GDs & UD)	Persons with Hon. Discharges	Statistical Evaluations
Race ^a	N = 176,975	N = 187,469	$\chi^2 = 4,776.67^e$
White	82%	90%	V = .11
Black	<u>18</u>	<u>10</u>	
Sex	N = 178,888 ^d	N = 189,209	$\chi^2 = 15.12^e$
Male	99%	98%	V = .01
Female	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	
Region of USA ^b	N = 169,373	N = 162,032	$\chi^2 = 107.42^e$
South	33%	32%	V = .02
North Central	29	30	
North East	19	19	
West	<u>19</u>	<u>18</u>	
In/Outside USA ^c	N = 166,998	N = 163,945	$\chi^2 = 29.38^e$
Inside USA	99%	98%	V = .01
Outside USA	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	
Education	N = 173,763	N = 187,083	$\chi^2 = 66,004.64^e$
Non-High School Grad	57%	18%	V = .43
High School Grad	39	61	
Beyond High School	<u>4</u>	<u>21</u>	
Mental Category	N = 165,791	N = 152,856	$\chi^2 = 14,735.46^e$
I (98-100 %-tile)	2%	6%	V = .22
II (65-92 %-tile)	20	35	
III (31-69 %-tile)	46	38	
IV & V (0-30 %-tile)	<u>32</u>	<u>20</u>	
Method of Entry	N = 178,684	N = 188,969	$\chi^2 = 9,694.08^e$
Volunteer	84%	71%	V = .16
Draftee	<u>16</u>	<u>29</u>	
Age at Entry	N = 176,506	N = 187,570	$\chi^2 = 27,189.35^e$
17	25%	8%	V = .27
18	27	19	
19	24	31	
20	13	20	
21	5	8	
22-23	4	10	
24 and older	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	
Branch of Service	N = 178,907	N = 189,209	$\chi^2 = 8,228.39^e$
Army	64%	52%	V = .15
Navy	20	20	
Marine Corps	8	9	
Air Force	<u>9</u>	<u>18</u>	

^aLess than 1% of either the Honorable or eligible group carried the racial designation "Other". These individuals do not appear in these analyses.

^bPersons living outside of the 50 United States were excluded from this analysis. They appear in the next analysis (In/Outside the USA).

^cInside USA refers to having a home of record from one of the 50 United States. Outside the USA is any other location (e.g., Puerto Rico, Guam, Canal Zone).

^dThe total for the DoD loss file data are different for each analysis. The differences reflect the number of persons in the analysis for whom data are available. For example, here 10,388 or 5% of the 189,176 GD and UD holders located in the DoD loss files are missing data on type of discharge, branch of service, or sex.

^eStatistically significant beyond the .01 level.

tionship between type of discharge and race. Eighteen percent of eligibles were black compared to 10% of those with HDs. Thus, more blacks were eligible for the SDRP than their numbers in service during this era would suggest.

Sex. Nearly all those discharged during the era were males. There was no difference between honorables and eligibles on this measure.

Region of USA. The homes of record of eligibles and the honorably discharged were categorized into the four regions of the USA used by the Bureau of the Census. (Individuals entering the service from outside the 50 states were excluded from this analysis.) There was no difference between eligibles and honorables on this dimension.

In/Outside the USA. There was no relationship between eligibility and a home of record outside the 50 United States.

Education. Preservice education was fairly strongly related to eligibility ($V = .43$). Over half (57%) the eligibles were high school dropouts, as compared to less than one fifth (18%) of the honorably discharged. This relationship between discharge and education is widely known and is one consistent difference found between these two groups (Flyer, 1963; Plag, 1964; Stephenson, 1965; and Bell and Holz, 1975).

Mental Category. Scores on the AFQT are reported as percentiles grouped into five broad categories. Although the difference between the honorables and eligibles on this variable is less dramatic than on the variable of education, the relationship between mental category and eligibility is relatively strong ($V = .22$). This relationship is also widely known.

Method of Entry. There was a higher proportion of draftees among the honorably discharged than among the GD or UD group. Although this difference was small ($V = .16$), it has been noted elsewhere that draftees generally give good service and thus get better discharges (Bell and Holz, 1975).

Age at Entry. Those who entered the service prior to their 18th birthdays were more likely than their peers to receive less-than-honorable discharges. Again, this fact has been repeatedly demonstrated (Flyer, 1963; Plag, 1964; Stephenson, 1965; Fox, Sullivan and McCubbin, 1970; and Bell and Holz, 1975).

Branch of Service. There was a small ($V = .15$) difference between the services in whether or not their members received honorable discharges. The principal difference was among former members of the Army and Air Force; the rate of UD/GDs was higher in the Army than in the Air Force. These differences, in turn, may have been due to differences in the "quality"

of the enlisted force (Stephan, Carroll, and Brown, 1972) or to the differences in mission for the separate services. However, it should be noted that there are also some apparent differences in delinquency policies between the services (Comptroller General, 1976).

Service Characteristics

The characteristics associated with the service careers of those who subsequently received less-than-honorable and honorable discharges appear in Table 2. The specific variables analyzed include: (1) length of service, (2) pay grade at discharge, (3) service in Vietnam, (4) marital status at discharge, (5) type of discharge, (6) date of discharge, and (7) age at discharge.

Length of Service. Those who received honorable discharges served significantly longer ($V = .42$). Only 40% of those who received GDs or UD's had at least 24 months of service, but 64% of those who received honorable discharges served at least that long. This finding was not unexpected since "trouble" in service usually occurs relatively early.

Pay Grade. There was a large difference in pay grade at discharge between eligibles and the honorably discharged ($V = .65$). The majority of eligibles were in the lowest two pay grades (i.e., 64% were either E-1 or E-2). In contrast, only 9% of the honorably discharged were in one of these two grades. Based on length of service figures, it appears that many eligibles had been reduced in rank sometime during their military careers.

Vietnam Service. The honorably discharged were more likely to have served in Vietnam than the eligibles (22% vs 13%). But the degree of relationship was not very strong ($V = .12$). Moreover, it should be noted that the Army and Marines were more likely to have been present in the country of Vietnam and thus be counted here. Service in a hostile fire zone or surrounding waters was not counted as Vietnam service in the analysis, although it was considered in the Program. ^{7/}

Date of Discharge. There was a small ($V = .15$) relationship between date and type of discharge. Persons with honorable discharges were more likely to have been discharged in FY 71 than the eligibles. The reason

^{7/} The percentages of Vietnam Era veterans in DoD who served in South Vietnam and Southeastern Asia were 30% and 39%, respectively.

Table 2
SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS OF ELIGIBLES AND HONORABLES

Characteristic	Eligible	Honorable	Statistical Evaluations
Length of Service	N = 178,300	N = 188,755	$\chi^2 = 64,159.45^b$
0- 5 months	9%	5%	V = .42
6-11	16	2	
12-17	19	3	
18-23	16	23	
24-35	20	22	
36-47	10	20	
48 and over	<u>10</u>	<u>24</u>	
Pay Grade	N = 162,671	N = 185,831	$\chi^2 = 145,316.90^b$
E1	34%	5%	V = .65
E2	30	4	
E3	18	11	
E4	12	42	
E5 and above	<u>5</u>	<u>37</u>	
Served in Vietnam ^a	N = 178,777	N = 189,063	$\chi^2 = 5,052.49^b$
Yes	13%	22%	V = .12
No	<u>87</u>	<u>78</u>	
Marital Status	N = 64,816	N = 108,023	$\chi^2 = 7,527.39^b$
Married	19%	39%	V = .21
Single	<u>81</u>	<u>61</u>	
Type of Discharge	N = 178,907	N = 189,218	$\chi^2 =$ N.A.
Honorable	0%	100%	V = N.A.
General	56	0	
Undesirable	<u>44</u>	<u>0</u>	
Date of Discharge	N = 178,907	N = 189,218	$\chi^2 = 8,822.74^b$
FY 71	29%	43%	V = .15
FY 72	44	38	
FY 73	<u>28</u>	<u>19</u>	
Age at Discharge	N = 177,211	N = 187,839	$\chi^2 = 71,176.47^b$
Less than 18	3%	2%	V = .44
18	12	2	
19	18	4	
20	20	8	
21	17	20	
22-23	17	37	
24 or older	<u>11</u>	<u>28</u>	
Current Age	N = 176,858	N = 187,623	$\chi^2 = 44,768.99^b$
Less than 24	3%	1%	V = .35
24	8	2	
25	14	4	
26	18	8	
27	17	15	
28-29	25	38	
30-31	9	17	
Over 31	<u>6</u>	<u>16</u>	

^aService in Vietnam refers to individual actually assigned to a unit based in the Republic of Vietnam. It does not count individuals serving elsewhere in South East Asia or in surrounding waters. Note that those separated after FY 70 were less likely to serve in Vietnam. For example, 30% of all individuals serving during this era had Vietnam service and 39% had served in South East Asia.

^bStatistically significant beyond the .01 level.

for this difference (e.g., possible changes in policy or rates of trouble in service) is not immediately clear.

Age at Discharge. Because of longer tenure and increased age at entry, the honorably discharged were generally older than the eligibles ($V = .44$).

Current Age. Because of relatively young age at entry, short tenure, and relatively early discharges, the eligibles are currently younger than the honorably discharged ($V = .35$). Forty-three percent of the eligibles were less than 27 years old compared to 15% of the honorably discharged.

Discussion

Eligibles were different in several ways from their contemporaries who received honorable discharges. At entry those who subsequently received GDs or UD's were more likely to have been high school dropouts, 17 year olds, and in the lower mental categories of the AFQT. Once they entered service, the eligibles had shorter service careers—usually less than 2 years—and low pay grades at separation. Most were in one of the two lowest pay grades. Because of short tenures, the eligibles were younger and less likely to be married when they separated. Also, they are currently younger.

As may be seen, SDRP eligibles are demographically different from their HD peers, and, as a group, gave inferior service to the military.

PARTICIPATION

In the initial report on the SDRP, type of discharge proved to be the largest single predictor of program participation ($V = .29$). It was even more predictive in the current data set ($V = .65$). ^{8/} Since type of discharge is itself associated with various demographic characteristics, it seemed wise to analyse participation among GDs and UD's separately. The tables that follow show how program participation was related to various characteristics at entry and service experience in GD and UD groups.

Participants at Entry

Table 3 shows how participants with GDs and UD's differed from the overall eligible groups at the time they entered service. The variables

^{8/} 56% of the eligibles held GDs but only 27% of the participants held this kind of discharge.

TABLE 3

CHARACTERISTICS OF ELIGIBLES AND PARTICIPANTS AT ENTRY

Characteristics	General Discharge Holders			Undesirable Discharge Holders		
	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation
Race ^{a/}	N= 99,244	N=4,288	$\chi^2 = 5.01 \frac{e/}{f/}$	N=77,731	N=11,532	$\chi^2 = 194.13 \frac{f/}{e/}$
White	82%	81%	$\phi = .03$	83%	77%	$\phi = .13$
Black	18	19		17	23	
Sex	N=100,157	N=4,316	$\chi^2 = 17.96 \frac{f/}{e/}$	N=78,731	N=11,646	$\chi^2 = 13.26 \frac{f/}{e/}$
Male	98%	99%	$\phi = .07$	99%	100%	$\phi = .03$
Female	2	1		1	0	
Region of USA ^{b/}	N= 90,497	N=3,890	$\chi^2 = 36.75 \frac{f/}{e/}$	N=74,876	N=11,065	$\chi^2 = 56.70 \frac{f/}{e/}$
South	31%	29%	$\phi = .10$	35%	33%	$\phi = .07$
North Central	29	28		28	28	
North East	21	25		18	19	
West	19	18		19	20	
In/Outside USA ^{c/}	N= 91,602	N=3,941	$\chi^2 = 0.24 \frac{e/}{f/}$	N=75,396	N=11,124	$\chi^2 = 5.35 \frac{e/}{f/}$
Inside USA	99%	99%	$\phi = .01$	99%	99%	$\phi = .02$
Outside USA	1	1		1	1	
Rural/Urban ^{d/}	N= 40,907	N=1,457	$\chi^2 = 78.49 \frac{f/}{e/}$	N=26,900	N= 2,991	$\chi^2 = 85.55 \frac{f/}{e/}$
Rural	75%	84%	$\phi = .23$	71%	78%	$\phi = .24$
Urban	25	16		29	22	
Family Income ^{d/}	N= 39,504	N=1,417	$\chi^2 = 27.19 \frac{f/}{e/}$	N=27,865	N= 2,963	$\chi^2 = 8.93 \frac{e/}{f/}$
Under \$6,000	6%	6%	$\phi = .14$	7%	7%	$\phi = .08$
\$6 - 7,999	22	19		26	24	
8 - 9,999	32	31		33	32	
10 -11,999	26	27		24	25	
12 -14,999	11	15		9	10	
15,000 up	2	3		1	2	

TABLE 3 (continued)

Characteristics	General Discharge Holders			Undesirable Discharge Holders		
	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Education</u>						
Non-High School Grad	N= 98,328 49%	N=4,235 41%	$X^2 = 128.76 \frac{f}{V} = .17$	N=75,435 68%	N =11,146 65%	$X^2 = 32.26 \frac{f}{V} = .05$
High School Gr. Beyond High Sc.	47 <u>5</u>	52 <u>7</u>		29 <u>4</u>	31 <u>4</u>	
<u>Mental Category</u>						
I (93-100 percentile)	N= 91,370 3%	N=3,925 3%	$X^2 = 68.06 \frac{f}{V} = .13$	N=74,421 2%	N =11,001 2%	$X^2 = 21.42 \frac{f}{V} = .04$
II (65-92 percentile)	22	27		17	18	
III 31-69 percentile)	47	45		44	44	
IV & V (0-30 percentile)	<u>28</u>	<u>24</u>		<u>37</u>	<u>35</u>	
<u>Method of Entry</u>						
Volunteer	N=100,040 90%	N=4,310 91%	$X^2 = 9.31 \frac{e}{V} = .05$	N=78,644 78%	N =11,629 82%	$X^2 = 137.94 \frac{f}{V} = .11$
Draftee	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>22</u>	<u>18</u>	

TABLE 3 (continued)

Characteristics	General Discharge Holders			Undesirable Discharge Holders		
	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Age at Entry</u>	N= 99,252	N=4,264	$\chi^2 = 8.65^e/$ V = .05	N=77,506	N =11,444	$\chi^2 = 241.32^f/$ V = .15
17	24%	24%		27%	29%	
18	30	31		23	26	
19	24	24		23	22	
20	12	11		14	13	
21	4	4		5	5	
22-23	4	3		5	4	
24 and older	2	2		3	2	
<u>Branch of Service</u>	N=100,157	N=4,316	$\chi^2 = 27.98^f/$ V = .08	N=78,731	N =11,646	$\chi^2 = 1.66^e/$ V = .01
Army	46%	47%		86%	86%	
Navy	31	31		6	6	
Marine Corps	9	7		6	6	
Air Force	13	15		3	3	

a/ Less than 1% of either the eligibles or the participants carried the racial designation "other". These individuals do not appear in these analyses.

b/ Persons living outside of the 50 United States were excluded from this analysis. They appear in the next analysis (In/Outside the USA).

c/ Inside USA refers to having a home of record from one of the 50 United States. Outside the USA is any other location (e.g., Puerto Rico, Guam, Canal Zone).

d/ Homes of Record are divided into rural and urban on the basis of the characteristic of the postal ZIP codes which are 50% or more rural in character are considered rural; the other are called urban. Family income also comes from the ZIP code. The former service member is assigned the average income for families living within his ZIP code area. ZIP code information came from AFES records and were thus only available for those eligibles and participants who entered service in FY 71 or later.

e/ Not statistically significant.

f/ Statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

examined are the same nine characteristics explored in Table 1. In addition, Table 3 also includes two measures taken from known characteristics of the man's postal ZIP code: (a) the predominantly rural or urban character of the home of record and (b) family income in the family of origin.

There were more urban participants than expected based upon the urban/rural split in the eligible population. This was true for both the GD and UD groups ($\phi = .23$ and $.24$, respectively). The remainder of the entry variables were largely unrelated to participation. In fact, 6 of the 22 correlations did not reach statistical significance; the remainder, although statistically significant, were quite low.

Participants' Service Characteristics

The service careers of GD and UD holders participating in the SDRP appear in Table 4. Seven of the eight characteristics examined are the same as in Table 2. The eighth--reason for separation--has been added here.

Length of Service. Participants spent a longer time in service than did eligibles. This was true of GD and UD participants (i.e., the correlations were $.32$ and $.29$, respectively). They were also much more likely to have completed at least 2 years of service--one of the criteria for up-grade--than were non-participants.

Pay Grade at Discharge. Participating GD holders were higher in grade than most eligibles ($V = .21$). The difference between eligibles and participants among the UD holders was also statistically significant, but smaller in size ($V = .16$).

Vietnam Service. There was essentially no relationship between service in Vietnam and participation in the SDRP. It should be noted, however, that the percentages serving in Vietnam reported here are less than would have been obtained had data from the entire era been available (see footnote 7, page 7).

Reason for Separation. The reasons for separation listed here were based upon the Interservice Separation Codes used by DMDC. Participants were different from eligibles in both the GD and UD group (correlations = $.27$ and $.88$, respectively). Among those with GDs, the participants were more likely to have been separated for (1) drug offenses and (2) "for the good of the service." 9/ They were also less likely to have been separated

9/ For a history and background on DoD's policy on discharge of drug abusers see Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)'s Letter to Honorable John Paul Hammerschmidt, Minority Leader of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs dated 14 July 1977.

TABLE 4

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS OF ELIGIBLES AND PARTICIPANTS

Characteristics	General Discharge Holders			Undesirable Discharge Holders		
	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Length of Service</u>	N= 99,840	N=4,298	X = 438.59 ^{b/} V = .32	N=78,460	N=11,601	X = 1009.20 ^{b/} V = .29
<u>0-5 Months</u>	13%	6%		4%	2%	
6-11	17	14		16	10	
12-17	19	18		19	16	
18-23	16	17		17	17	
24-35	18	23		22	27	
36-47	9	11		11	15	
48 and above	9	11		11	13	
<u>Pay Grade</u>	N= 93,353	N=3,999	X = 182.32 ^{b/} V = .21	N=69,318	N= 7,114	X = 256.42 ^{b/} V = .16
E-1	32%	24%		38%	34%	
E-2	30	28		30	25	
E-3	21	25		14	19	
E-4	12	16		12	17	
E-5 and above	5	6		5	5	
<u>Served in Vietnam</u> ^{a/}	N=100,131	N=4,312	X = 18.04 ^{b/} V = .06	N=78,646	N=11,633	X = 9.53 ^{b/} V = .03
Yes	11%	13%		16%	17%	
No	89	87		84	83	
<u>Marital Status</u>	N= 49,793	N=2,209	X = 16.83 ^{b/} V = .09	N=15,023	N= 2,435	X = 26.75 ^{b/} V = .10
Married	17%	14%		26%	22%	
Single	83	86		74	78	
<u>Date of Discharge</u>	N=100,171	N=4,316	X = 4.78 ^{c/} V = .03	N=78,736	N=11,736	X = 62.32 ^{b/} V = .07
FY 71	30%	31%		27%	30%	
FY 72	42	43		45	45	
FY 73	27	26		28	25	

TABLE 4 (continued)

Characteristics	General Discharge Holders			Undesirable Discharge Holders		
	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Age at Discharge</u>	N= 99,445	N=2,761	$\chi^2 = 81.91^b/$ V = .17	N=77,766	N= 7,857	$\chi^2 = 165.16^b/$ V = .15
<u>Less than 18</u>	4%	2%		2%	1%	
18	13	10		11	8	
19	20	18		16	16	
20	21	22		20	21	
21	16	18		18	20	
22-23	15	19		20	22	
24 or older	10	11		13	12	
<u>Current Age</u>	N= 99,294	N=2,752	$\chi^2 = 375.90^b/$ V = .35	N=77,564	N= 8,386	$\chi^2 = 718.54^b/$ V = .29
<u>Less than 24</u>	1%	4%		6%	3%	
24	6	9		10	7	
25	13	17		15	14	
26	18	20		18	18	
27	18	18		17	17	
28-29	27	20		22	23	
30-31	10	6		7	14	
Over 31	7	5		6	4	

TABLE 4 (continued)

Characteristics	General Discharge Holders			Undesirable Discharge Holders		
	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation
Separation Reason	N=100,171	N=4,316	$\chi^2 = 308.80$ ^{b/}	N=78,736	N=11,646	$\chi^2 = 8920.63$ ^{b/}
Char/Behav. Dis.	34%	33%	.27	1%	1%	.88
Unsuit.(Type UNK)	14	10		4	-	
Drugs	12	17		3	3	
Motivation	12	10		-	-	
Discred. Incidents	7	8		13	16	
Good of Service	7	9		67	69	
Fraud. Entry	5	3		1	1	
Inaptitude	3	2		-	-	
Shirking	1	2		3	3	
Civ. Court Convic.	1	2		1	1	
Other	4	4		7	6	

^{a/}Service in Vietnam refers to individual actually assigned to a unit based in the Republic of Vietnam. It does not count individuals serving elsewhere in South East Asia or in surrounding waters. Note that those separated after FY 70 were less likely to serve in Vietnam. For example, 30% of all individuals serving during this era had Vietnam service and 39% had served in South East Asia.

^{b/}Statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

^{c/}Not statistically significant.

for unsuitability or fraudulent enlistment. Among UD holders, the differences were mainly caused by the absence of the unsuitable and fraudulently enlisted among the participants.

Marital Status. Marital status at discharge was also largely unrelated to participation in either of the two eligible groups (i.e., the correlations between marital status and participation were .09 and .10 for GD and UD holders, respectively). But these findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the large number of cases for which no marital data are available.

Date of Discharge. In the "shortened window", date of discharge was also largely unrelated to participation. But it was related to participation in the USAF when the entire Vietnam Era was considered (see Appendix A). Apparently the range of years considered in these analyses is too short to have had much effect on participation.

Age at Discharge. There was at least a statistical relationship between age at discharge and participation, although the size of relationship was rather small (the correlations were .18 and .14 for the GD and UD groups, respectively). In both cases the participants were slightly older.

Current Age. As in the case of age at discharge, there was a small, but nonetheless statistically significant, relationship between participation and age at the start of the SDRP. Participants were slightly older (correlations = .18 and .16, respectively).

Discussion

Participants were different from other eligibles in several ways: they more often held UDs, had urban homes of record, had served longer and risen higher in grade than had the overall eligible group. Among GD participants, drug abusers and those discharged "for the good of the service" were over-represented.

The pattern of differences points clearly to perceived benefit as the major motivation for program participation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To place the SDRP in proper perspective, one must realize that the vast majority of those separated during the Vietnam Era received honorable

discharges (94%). The eligibles--5.5% of the discharges--were not only atypical in type of discharge received, but in other ways as well. They were less educated, lower in mental ability, and younger at entry. They served significantly less time and were less likely to have advanced beyond E-2.

The characteristics of participants, in turn, were largely a function of those who received GDs and UD's. With the exception of the rural/urban nature of the home of record, the preservice characteristics of the participants were essentially the same as the eligible groups from which they came. The difference in the nature of the homes of record is difficult to interpret since many of these former servicemen no longer live in the same hometowns. For the most part, the Program did attract the kinds of persons it was intended to serve.

The differences between eligibles and participants were mainly in the area of perceived benefit. One of the largest differences was type of discharge; UD's participated at a much higher rate. Those with better service records--longer service, higher rank and "better" reasons for separation--were more likely to participate.

Perceived benefit--not demography--determined participation in the SDRP.

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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX A

CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY USAF PARTICIPANTS 1/

Unlike the other services, the U. S. Air Force has automated data for eligibles and participants covering the entire Vietnam Era. The purpose of this appendix is to use the USAF data to show: (1) how demographic factors affect participation in the USAF across the whole era, and (2) how results in the "shortened window" compare with whole-era findings.

METHODOLOGY

Separation records from the Vietnam Era were searched to locate individuals who received GDs or UD. Relevant demographic information for the "eligibles" was then extracted. Eligible participants were then matched against the whole eligible group to generate statements about the demographic characteristics of the "participants." In the case of the USAF, the separation file searched was the Airman Classification Battery/Airman Reenlistment and Loss (ACB/ARL) file. This basic data source covers all Airmen who entered the USAF after 31 December 1955; 37,839 (or 90%) of the 41,058 individuals believed to have been separated with GDs or UD during the Vietnam Era were located.

The matching of participants began with the 1002 eligible Air Force personnel who had applied to the SDRP as of 30 April 1977. Among these participants, 532 or 53% of them were located in the ACB/ARL file.

The basic question posed about them in these analyses is whether participants are "representative" of eligibles. The question is answered by means of a chi square analysis. When the participant group is representative, the chi square is not statistically significant. When the participant group is different from the eligible population, the chi square is statistically significant. However, the presence of a statistically significant result does not always mean that the resulting difference has practical utility or policy implications. Differences that result in rather large chi squares (i.e., those which produce correlations of .20 or larger) sometimes appear to have utility.

1/ The data for this report come from HQ, Air Force Military Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. Statistical analyses were conducted by the Computational Science Division, Air Force Human Resources Laboratory, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. The cooperation of these agencies in the preparation of this report is appreciated.

Two parallel sets of analyses were conducted for the USAF data: (1) analyses of the entire era and (2) analyses of differences within the data from FY 71 on. The latter set of analyses was important since that was the period during which comparable data were available from the other services. Here it was important to know whether for at least one of the services the "shortened window" data yielded the same results as data from the entire era.

ANALYSES FOR THE ENTIRE VIETNAM ERA

The analyses for the Vietnam Era appear in two tables. The first deals with 6 variables available at the time Airmen entered the service. The second table displays 3 variables measured at discharge.

CHARACTERISTICS AT ENTRY

Race, sex, region of the USA, level of civilian education, mental ability as measured by the AFQT, and age were recorded at entry in service (Table A-1). A seventh measure--whether the individual came from some location outside of the 50 United States--was not analyzed due to the extremely small number of such cases; i.e., there were only 51 such persons among the eligibles and none among the participants.

Race. There were no differences between participants and the eligible group; both were about 75% white and 25% black.

Sex. Sex showed a small ($V = .11$), but nonetheless statistically significant relationship to participation. Females were less likely to participate than males.

Region of USA. The homes of record of the eligible and participant groups were categorized into the four regions of the USA used by the Bureau of the Census. (As noted above, individuals entering the USAF from outside the 50 states were excluded from this analysis.) There was no difference in the locations of the homes of record between participant and eligible groups.

Education. Level of civilian education was related to participation ($V = .18$). The less educated were more likely to participate. Since those with higher educations pay more attention to the mass media and thus are more likely to have heard about the SDRP, this finding seems, at first, to be unexplainable. However, education is also associated with type of dis-

Table A-1
CHARACTERISTICS AT ENTRY FOR TOTAL ERA

Characteristics	Eligibles	Participants	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Race</u> ^{a/}	N= 41,887 ^{c/}	N= 531 ^{c/}	$\chi^2 = 0.77$ ^{d/} V = .04
White	76%	75%	
Black	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	
<u>Sex</u>	N= 41,887	N= 531	$\chi^2 = 6.88$ ^{e/} V = .11
Male	97%	99%	
Female	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	
<u>Region</u> ^{b/}	N= 12,269	N= 213	$\chi^2 = 3.80$ ^{d/} V = .13
South	33%	36%	
Northeast	24	23	
North Central	30	24	
West	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	
<u>Education</u>	N= 34,089	N= 468	$\chi^2 = 14.85$ ^{e/} V = .18
Non-High School Grad	58%	66%	
High School Grad	31	23	
Beyond High School	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>	
<u>Mental Category</u>	N= 37,681	N= 497	$\chi^2 = 3.95$ ^{d/} V = .09
I(93-100 percentile)	4%	5%	
II(65-92 percentile)	29	32	
III(31-64 percentile)	48	44	
IV&V(0-30 percentile)	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	
<u>Age At Entry</u>	N= 37,685	N= 498	$\chi^2 = 11.58$ ^{d/} V = .15
17	12%	9%	
18	38	41	
19	30	28	
20	12	12	
21	4	6	
22 and older	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	

^{a/} Persons carrying the racial designation "other" (e.g., orientals, American Indian) were eliminated from this analysis.

^{b/} Persons living outside of the 50 United States were eliminated from this analysis.

^{c/} Although 41,058 eligibles and 532 participants were located in the file, most of the analyses will contain less cases than that because of missing information. That is, only cases which had usable data for the particular analysis appear in the analysis and in the total.

^{d/} Not statistically significant.

^{e/} Statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

charge. Type of discharge, in turn, is related to participation (Table A-2). Those with UDs have less education and are more likely to participate.

Mental Category. Scores on the AFQT are reported as percentiles grouped into five broad categories. There was no difference in the mental ability of those who participated compared to the eligible group.

CHARACTERISTICS AT DISCHARGE

Three characteristics at discharge appear in Table A-2. They are: pay grade (or rank), type of discharge, and date of discharge.

Pay Grade. Most eligibles and participants were in the lowest two pay grades (57 and 56% respectively). This relatively low grade structure suggests short tenure, reduction in grade, or both. ^{2/}

Type of Discharge. Since those with UDs had more to gain from participation in the Program, it is not surprising to learn that they were participating at a much higher rate. Although they only constituted 15% of the eligibles, they accounted for 40% of the participants. In fact, type of discharge was the strongest determinant of participation in the USAF portion of the SDRP (V= .57).

Date of Discharge. Date of discharge was also fairly strongly related to participation (V= .33). 43% of eligibles were separated after 1969, yet 59% of those participating came from this time frame.

The reason for the increase in participation among those separated since 1969 is not immediately clear. The rate of UDs remained relatively stable during this time. But perhaps bad discharges have the greatest impact on lifestyle shortly after they are received. In time, the adverse effects of such discharges may be overcome.

Summary. Participants were significantly different from the eligible group on 4 of the 9 measures. Two of these differences were sufficiently large to have policy implications: type and date of discharge. The participants were more likely to have UDs and to be relatively recently discharged.

^{2/} DoD statistics on USAF enlistees in FY 71 showed that the average man achieved the grade E-3 prior to completion of his 2nd year of service and that less than 12% of the enlisted force were in the lowest two grades at the end of FY 71.

Table A-2

CHARACTERISTICS AT DISCHARGE FOR TOTAL ERA

Characteristics	Eligibles	Participation	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Pay Grade</u>	N= 41,958	N= 532	$X^2 = 10.60^a/$
E-1	35%	39%	V = .14
E-2	22	17	
E-3	26	27	
E-4	13	14	
Above E-4	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	
<u>Type of Discharge</u>	N= 41,958	N= 532	$X^2 = 249.87^b/$
General	85%	60%	V = .57
Undesirable	<u>15</u>	<u>40</u>	
<u>Date of Discharge</u>	N= 41,958	N= 532	$X^2 = 66.57^b/$
CY 64	5%	3%	V = .33
65	11	5	
66	8	4	
67	8	8	
68	12	11	
69	13	10	
70	11	14	
71	11	15	
72	17	25	
73	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	

a/ Not statistically significant.

b/ Statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

EFFECT OF THE SHORTENED WINDOW APPROACH FOR THE AIR FORCE

Table A-3 shows the differences at entry between eligibles and participants among those persons separated since the start of FY 71. The variables examined are the same as those used in Table A-1: only the time frame for the sample is different. There were no statistically significant differences in race, sex, region of the USA, level of civilian education, mental ability or age at entry between eligible and participant groups.

Pay grade at discharge, and type and date of discharge are examined in Table A-4. Only one of these--type of discharge--was related to participation ($V = .51$). Again, those with UDs were more likely to participate.

One of the two major findings from the total era--that type of discharge is highly related to program participation--is also found in the "shortened window". The second major finding--that date of discharge is also salient--is not found when the time period is shortened. The reasons seem fairly obvious. The shift in participation rates occurred prior to the start of FY 71.

Higher rates of participation among UD holders are fairly easily explained in terms of perceived benefits: they have more to gain. Those more recently discharged may also gain more since their "bad discharge" may be causing them more trouble than those who have been out of service longer. It should be noted that the increase in participation of those recently discharged is not due to type of discharge since there was no marked increase in the percent of UDs in these later years.

Two minor findings (i.e., that both sex and education were related to participation) do not cross-validate in the "shortened window". The lack of consistency may be due to the smaller number of cases which, in turn, reduces the chances for small differences to appear statistically meaningful. But regardless of the test of significance, the absolute size of the relationship among sex, education and participation is rather low.

That USAF findings ^{3/} for both the total period and the shortened window analyses mirror those for the shortened window for DoD is encouraging. In all of these analyses the major factor driving participation is benefit rather than demography.

^{3/} However, caution should be exercised in comparing the USAF to the other services. Standards for entrance into the enlisted ranks of the USAF were maintained at higher education and aptitude levels and thus it experienced lower rates of "trouble".

Table A-3

CHARACTERISTICS AT ENTRY FOR THE "SHORTENED WINDOW"

(1 July 1970 - 28 March 1973)

Characteristics	Eligibles	Participation	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Race</u> ^{a/}	N= 15,720	N= 279	$\chi^2 = 1.83^c/$
White	71%	75%	V = .08
Black	<u>29</u>	<u>25</u>	
<u>Sex</u>	N= 15,720	N= 279	$\chi^2 = 4.85^c/$
Male	97%	99%	V = .13
Female	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	
<u>Region</u> ^{b/}	N= 11,373	N= 203	$\chi^2 = 3.79^c/$
South	33%	35%	V = .14
Northeast	30	24	
North Central	24	24	
West	<u>14</u>	<u>17</u>	
<u>Education</u>	N= 15,033	N= 270	$\chi^2 = 5.83^c/$
Non-High School Grad	95%	91%	V = .15
High School Grad	5%	9%	
Or above	—	—	
<u>Mental Category</u>	N= 15,136	N= 271	$\chi^2 = 3.47^c/$
I(93-100 percentile)	3%	4%	V = .11
II(65-92 percentile)	26	29	
III(31-64 percentile)	45	45	
IV&V(0-30 percentile)	<u>26</u>	<u>22</u>	
<u>Age At Entry</u>	N= 15,151	N= 271	$\chi^2 = 2.18^c/$
17	7%	7%	V = .09
18	40	39	
19	35	33	
20	12	13	
21	3	4	
22 and older	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	

a/ Persons carrying the racial designation "other" (e.g., orientals, American Indian) were eliminated from this analysis.

b/ Persons living outside the 50 United States were eliminated from this analysis.

c/ Not statistically significant.

Table A-4

CHARACTERISTICS AT DISCHARGE IN THE "SHORTENED WINDOW"

(1 July 1970 - 28 March 1973)

Characteristics	Eligibles	Participation	Statistical Evaluation
<u>Pay Grade</u>	N= 15,735	N= 279	$\chi^2 = 6.63^{\underline{a/}}$
E-1	33%	34%	V = .15
E-2	25	18	
E-3	28	30	
E-4	12	15	
Above E-4	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	
<u>Type of Discharge</u>	N= 15,725	N= 279	$\chi^2 = 100.65^{\underline{b/}}$
General	86%	65%	V = .51
Undesirable	<u>14</u>	<u>35</u>	
<u>Date of Discharge</u>	N= 15,725	N= 279	$\chi^2 = 0.68^{\underline{a/}}$
CY 70	14%	14%	V = .02
71	30	29	
72	45	47	
73	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>	

a/ Not statistically significant.b/ Statistically significant beyond the .01 level.